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Apropos Delivers Interaction Management for Call Centers

OAK BROOK, Ill., March 4 /PRNewswire/ -- At Computer Telephony
Expo, Apropos Technology announced Apropos Version 4, the latest
version of its flagship product (formerly named Call Link), an
advanced total call center management solution. The new version
introduces fully integrated multimedia capabilities that enable call
center agents to view and respond to all types of inbound
interactions -- from live calls to Web callback requests -- in a single
multimedia queue. Apropos Version 4 provides call center managers
with real-time information on all interaction types to better manage,
control, and report on call center activity.

Apropos Version 4 is a sophisticated call distribution and
management system that intelligently links corporate telephone
systems, networks, and databases with powerful third party
applications, such as customer service, help desk and sales
automation. This system can dramatically improve how businesses
provide customer service with documented productivity gains of up
to 50%. Apropos Version 4 is a client/server call center solution that
combines intelligent call and message distribution, interactive voice
response, smart desktop messaging, real-time supervisory
capabilities, and cradle-to-grave interaction reporting -- all from one
integrated offering. Apropos' call center management solution is
currently employed at over 80 installations worldwide.

In order to provide premier service to their customers, companies
like 3Com are using Apropos to provide intelligent call distribution
combined with end-to-end customer interaction tracking, alarming,
and real-time status reporting on the activities within the call center.
Providing real-time information is crucial when they're dealing with
large volumes of calls each day. With Version 4, they will now have
the ability to effectively manage all types of inbound and outbound
interactions -- such as live calls, e-mails, voice mails, faxes,
abandoned calls, and requests for Web callbacks. The system allows
call center managers to establish business rules on how and when
they want different types of interactions handled by their agents.
Based on these rules, the Version 4 Agent application will queue the
interactions for the agent in the order determined as "highest
priority."

By managing all the interactions into the call center with one integrated system, managers have access to a complete history, cradle to grave, of each and every transaction. With this transaction record, businesses can, for the first time, determine what their "true" cost of providing service is to their customers.

"Our goal is to help businesses manage the distribution, alarming, and reporting of various interactions within the call center to provide greater overall service levels to customers, regardless of how they contacted their business," said Apropos President Kevin Kerns. "Apropos is focused on providing the most sophisticated interaction management system on the market, giving call centers the ability to manage their electronic interactions with customers with the same kind of intelligence and service levels they give live callers."

"To maintain superior customer service we need to get to our customers quickly with as much information possible at the agents' fingertips," said Lael Miller, a support programs manager for 3Com in Skokie, Ill. "Apropos' call center management solution captures all of the information we required to cut our customer's call-wait time by 85%. We expect that the new multimedia interaction functions will provide even more information and control -- and that can only help us do our job that much better. The enhancements in Apropos Version 4 are proof of the commitment Apropos has in enabling us to get to our customers quickly with the highest quality response."

New Apropos Version 4 Features

Version 4 addresses several key market requirements: the need for call center agents and their managers to effectively respond to customers, the need to work with an extended number of PBX manufacturers, and the need for programmers to quickly create and modify the call flows that run on the Apropos Server platform. New features include:

- Integrated multimedia queue organizes all inbound and outbound

interactions -- such as live calls, e-mails, voice mails, faxes,

abandoned calls and requests for Web call backs -- in one place, for

more efficient handling by the customer contact center. Managers can

then generate complete reports on all interactions that come through

their system.

- Integrated interaction reporting gives managers a new level of

visibility into all interactions that hit the call center by customer.

Companies can look at one report and see exactly how many contacts were

received via e-mail, fax, voice, Web call-backs, etc. from any specific

customer in any designated time period. This provides managers with the

data they need to improve the operational efficiency and effectiveness

of the center and, for the very first time, give call center managers

an accurate accounting of how much it's really costing their business to

deliver service to each customer.

- Web callback and chat allows a customer browsing a Web site to initiate

contact with a call center by simply selecting a "Connect now" icon on

the Web page. A message is sent to the Web server and the customer is

sent a Java-applet to complete with pertinent data needed to identify

the customer. The Apropos system will use this information to route the

request to the appropriately-skilled agent group to make contact.

Automatic notification is made to the customer on the anticipated time

and position in queue. Depending on the customer's configuration, the

system will launch either a phone call to the customer's desktop phone

or engage in a two-way chat dialog with the customer. Web

synchronization (or co-browsing) is provided to walk customers through

the Web site to resolve problems.

- Application Designer provides customers a graphical object-oriented

interface to make changes to existing scripts within the Apropos Server.

This intuitive user interface design allows system administrators with

minimal programming knowledge to quickly modify call flows and make

system changes where necessary.

Apropos Version 4 Improvements

- Version 4 provides increased system capacity and improved scalability to

match changing call center needs.

- Improved system partitioning allows supervisors to only see and control

agents assigned to them (as opposed to seeing all agents activities) and

provides reports that are restricted to the data relevant to the person

viewing the reports.

- Interaction management capabilities help ensure that the same level of

consistent service provided to telephone callers is applied to all types

of interactions customers have with the center (e-mail, faxes, etc.)

- Enhanced user interfaces for the Agent and Supervisor are based on

Microsoft's new Coolbar(TM) technology.

Pricing and Availability

Apropos Version 4 will ship during the third quarter of 1998. Pricing for Version 4 is commensurate with Apropos' current pricing structure. Pricing is contingent upon individual client requirements and is configured on the size, complexity and features of each site. Sales information on Apropos Version 4 can be obtained by calling Apropos Technology at 630-472-9600, or send e-mail to info@apropos.com.

About Apropos

Apropos Technology develops and markets the leading switch and network independent, client/server total call center management (TCCM(TM)) system on the market. It offers an integrated package of call center technologies including: intelligent call and message

distribution, interactive voice response, smart desktop messaging, real time supervisory capabilities, and cradle-to-grave interaction reporting. By merging major call center technology disciplines into one integrated management system, Apropos provides call center managers with a superior level of visibility and control into the entire lifecycle of any interaction. This integrated management concept reduces the complexity and cost of implementing call center automation and is the next logical evolution for CTI applications. Apropos works with most existing PBX telephone systems, legacy databases and networks, and third party business applications.

About the Company

Apropos is currently the most widely used total call center management system with over 80 successful installations worldwide, with companies such as 3Com, Pfizer, Nestle, Pepsi, Hewlett-Packard, Carlson Travel, Seagate and Southern California Edison. Apropos' worldwide headquarters in the US can be reached at 630-472-9600, or info@apropos.com.
SOURCE Apropos Technology

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/NOTE TO EDITORS: Apropos can be found at the Computer Telephony Expo, Booth #2608./

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